

P 251250Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2169
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
INFO CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
IRAN COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
CJCS WASHINGTON DC
DIA WASHINGTON DC
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J-5//
HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

S E C R E T ABU DHABI 000193

NOFORN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/25/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PARM](#) [MOPS](#) [MASS](#) [IR](#) [QA](#) [RU](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: STRONG WORDS IN PRIVATE FROM MBZ AT IDEX -- BASHES IRAN,
QATAR, RUSSIA

REF: (A) ABU DHABI 174
(B) STATE 14577

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: On the margins of Abu Dhabi's largest defense exhibition (IDEX), Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) engaged visiting US dignitaries with strident remarks about Iran and Qatar's dangerous ties to extremist elements (including Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood). He stated flatly that Qatar is allied with the Brotherhood (posited as the UAEG's mortal enemy) and clearly betrayed the GCC by inviting Iran to the January "Arab" summit. MbZ cited his own desire to defend his country as a counterpoint to extremists' loyalty to their "movement" as opposed to their constituent population. He expressed skepticism about the ability of the GCC to cooperate in the military sphere, and urged the US to work with individual countries bilaterally as a way of moving the process forward. Praising the UAE Air Force in ensuring national defense, he said his officers had instructions to find and be ready to stamp out Iranian missiles. He was morbidly confident that Israel would attempt a military strike on Iran this year, likely provoking Tehran to lash out at proximate targets like the UAE (identified as a partner of Israel's U.S. ally). He was also harsh on Russia's role in the region, as it followed its hero (Putin) in citing its villain (America) as the source of its woes. He predicted unhelpful cooperation between Moscow and Tehran. Closing the meeting on a more upbeat note, MbZ was pleased with the assurance that the U.S. Navy was in the Gulf and hoped it would remain here for generations. End summary.

¶2. (C) During the bi-annual International Defence Exhibition 2009 (IDEX) held in Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan (MbZ) met with the official US Delegation, US Ambassador Richard Olson, US Defense Attache colonel Bret Rider and Chief US Liaison Office Colonel David Sprague on site at IDEX. Key members of the US delegation consisted of VADM William Gortney (CDR NAVCENT), Mr. Keith Webster (DASA/DE&C), Ms. Beth McCormick (Dep Dir DSCA), BG Genaro Dellerocco (USA PEO Missiles & Space), BG Michael Terry (CDR USASAC), and RDML Steven Voetsch (A/SECNAV/IP). The discussions were broad-ranging but typically centered on, or arose in conjunction with, naval operations in the Arabian Gulf. As is usually the case, Iran was the true center of the discussion.

Qatar aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood

¶3. (S/NF) Perhaps the most revealing part of the discussion was on the subject of Qatar, as it relates to Iran. MbZ asked note-takers on both sides to stop writing and to keep his comments off the record as he stated that Qatar is "part of the Muslim Brotherhood." He encouraged the US to review the employees of Al Jazeera and predicted we'd find 90% of the staff affiliated with the Brotherhood. When Qatar invited Iran to the Arab League meeting (January 16), MbZ saw that as a betrayal of the first caliber. He stated he knows Hamid bin Khalifa and Hamid bin Jasim well and he could not understand why

they would betray fellow Arabs unless they were beholden to the Muslim Brothers. He cited as proof of Qatari perfidy that Doha gave Hamas and Hizballah \$930 million. He asked rhetorically why else would an Arab leader support movements like this unless they were part of the movement.

14. (S/NF) In a further example linking Iran and Qatar, MbZ told the story of the Moroccan Foreign Minister who received a call from Iran. The FM was directed (by Iran) to work with Doha and agree with what they propose. The FM told the Iranian that he would listen to his boss, the King of Morocco, and not a Persian who had no say in the matter. (Comment: the real point of the story was to illustrate the inroads that Iran has already made into the Arab League thanks to Qatar. End comment.)

15. (S/NF) The discussion on Qatar led to a broader MbZ condemnation of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and its affect on the region. (Being labeled a Muslim Brother is about the worst epithet possible in MBZ vocabulary.) He sees Iranian influence in the Brotherhood very clearly as both a way to agitate the Arab populace and render the traditional leaders of Arab society impotent. MbZ spoke of Hamas and Hizballah in the same breath and grouped them with UBL as transnational threats posing as national movements. He used the story of Khalid Mishal's visit to Egypt as the most recent example of nefarious intent. Mishal was invited on an official visit by President Hosni Mubarak, including arrangements for housing Mishal in the fashion he accords national leaders. Mishal reportedly rejected the offer and told Mubarak that he would stay with "his boss," the leader of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and avowed enemy of Mubarak. "Why was the leader of a Palestinian faction calling the leader of an Egyptian terrorist organization his boss?" Borders and nations do not matter to these people, said MbZ, just the movement. On the other hand, the UAE as a nation is very important to MbZ and he sees it as his duty to maintain its integrity.

GCC cohesion a myth

16. (S) Admiral Gortney talked of military coalitions and multinational exercises as a way to prepare for unforeseen eventualities, especially as regards Iran. MbZ was very quick to respond that he had tried to forge GCC cohesion for "27 years" and failed. "I am not a believer in grouping the GCC together...ask us who wants to be involved and we will step forward, the others will take a step back." "Encourage those of us who wish to lead to lead and we will; sooner or later the others will step forward but only when it is necessary." The message was very clear: the UAE should be dealt with bilaterally by the US, not as a constituent part of the GCC or Arab world. Additionally, he suggested the US is wasting its time trying to get the other members of the GCC to cooperate in the common interest, when that is not the primary motivation of most GCC states. Admiral Gortney thanked MbZ for the UAE Navy's plans to command CTF 152 later this year. This is a clear indication the UAE will lead when given the opportunity. The UAE's leadership of the CTF will convince those who are not committed to the coalition to join and support this key effort in the Arabian Gulf.

Extremists prey on young minds prone to fantasy

17. (C) MbZ stated the UAE has two enemies, Iran and terrorism. It is important to him that when one side of a partnership has information on either of these threats they must share it for the common good of both. He told the story of his son who was becoming interested in the teachings of Muslim fundamentalists; he sent his son on a humanitarian mission to Ethiopia but not with the Red Crescent, rather with the Red Cross. His son returned from the mission with his vision of the west intact and in fact corrected. He was astonished that the Christians with the Red Cross were giving food and support to anyone who needed the support, not just to Christians. His son had only heard the stories of the west through the lens of Al Jazeera and others similarly aligned. In a message often heard from MbZ he stressed that no true religion tells anyone to kill innocents. No true religion tells anyone to be a suicide bomber. The fantasy of being a martyr for Islam and riding a golden chariot to heaven to live in a 7-star hotel to be waited on by 70 virgins is just that, a fantasy exploited by extremists.

Strengthening defenses -- against Iran's missiles

¶8. (S/NF) MbZ spoke proudly of his Air Force and its role in the nation's defense. He stated "this is the Middle East and we will do what we need to do...when the Iranians fire their missiles we will go after them and kill them." He said he feels the worst thing he can do as a leader is to allow the Iranians to attack his people and then to have no answer when young Emiratis ask "what are you going to do?"

He stated with some certainty this is the year the Israelis will attack Iran. He believes Iran will have two possible courses of action; sit back and do nothing, and have the world so thoroughly condemn the actions of Israel that Iran becomes the hero for not responding to an "unprovoked" attack. MbZ feels the more likely Iranian reaction to an Israeli attack would be to let loose its missiles on the allies of those who support Israel (i.e., close partners of the U.S.). He sees the UAE at the top of the Iranian target list. MbZ told Admiral Gortney that he has directed his Armed Forces Chief of Staff (COS) to find the missiles now and draw up plans to kill them. The COS was directed to work with the Americans so the UAE's jets have the corridors and experience needed to make the kill. (Note: Septel reports the COS's appeal for urgent deployment of Patriot batteries in the UAE. End note.)

Down on Russia

¶9. (S/NF) After Ambassador delivered ref B points, MbZ spoke of the destabilizing effect of the Russians particularly in light of the purported S-300 missile sale to Iran. He said Russians are very difficult to convince of anything. Russians need two things, a hero and a villain. They now have a hero in Putin and they are once again making America the villain. MbZ recalled that Putin announced in 2008 that Russia had huge financial reserves and would not suffer under the economic collapse, but now the reserves are gone. The Russian "hero" tells his people daily that America is the reason for the high price of bread in Moscow, America is the reason for the low price of oil, etc. MbZ said 2009 will be a very bad year for Russia, whose people will turn to their hero more and more. He thinks we need to control the Russians but said he is not well versed in dealing with Russia -- America knows how to deal with Russia from past experience and America must deal with Russia now. Russia will be the biggest winner of any instability in the Gulf; Iran will use Russia to re-build after Israel attacks. MbZ asked Ambassador for his assessment of Russian intentions, Ambassador described the challenges the US had faced in dealing with Russia since Putin's 2007 speech at the Munich Security Conference.

Upbeat on the U.S. Naval presence

¶10. (C) The meeting ended as it started, with MbZ as the gracious and upbeat host wishing his guests well and wishing American business the greatest successes during IDEX. His mood was relaxed and confident and looking to the future. When Admiral Gortney noted that the US Navy has been here in the Gulf for 60 years, MbZ commented that he's been hearing that for over 40 years and his fondest hope is that he continues to hear that for 40 more -- and that his children will hear the same message from America.

¶11. (SBU) Vice Admiral William Gortney, Commander NAVCENT, cleared this cable prior to its transmission.

OLSON